NEWSLETTER

ARBORETA & BOTANIC GARDENS

prepared by the public services division

January 10, 1976

Research Division

Ever have the urge to grow your own rubber? George Hanson has begun a research project designed to improve the rubber-yielding potential of a Mexican shrub to the point where it can compete in the market place with the Malasian rubber tree. A renewed interest has been kindled in this shrub called guayule, and a recent international conference was held in Tucson, Arizona to discuss its future. The group of current and former guayularos decided the time had come to revitalize the project which had lain nearly dormant since World War II when the U.S. was growing as much as 32,000 acres of the shrub. This composite grows wild in Mexico and repoduces from seeds as well as by underground retoños. Gardeners beware, this plant was considered a weed by California farmers in the 40's --when pulled it will "bounce" right back.

Education Division

We'd like to take this opportunity to call your attention to the Civic Center Evening Class Program sponsored by Los Angeles County and City in cooperation with East Los Angeles College and Belmont Adult School. About 20 different subjects are offered - none in horticulture or botany - between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. in the Civic Center area. There are no tuition fees. Registration starts January 21st. This month's issue of the County Digest lists the courses available along with other pertinent information.

Public Services Division

We want to extend our official welcome to Diane Peterson, ITC, who has replaced Linda Hazard who moved over to Communications in a higher position. Diane, who comes to us from Flood Control, has done a great job filling in at the switchboard for a few hours each day in the absence of Marge Wood.

To all Divisions: We have two new tape recorders available for your use. One is a three-speed, two track monophonic reel-to-reel recorder and playback; the other is an AC or battery-operated cassette recorder and playback with both built-in and external microphones.

Personnel

During January of each year employees may elect to receive cash reimbursement for the quivalent of one day of unused sick leave earned and accummulated during the preceding calendar year provided that:

(a) they were continuously employed in a full-time permanent position during the calendar year (January through December, 1975)

(b) they had not used any sick leave for any reasons, including personal reasons.

Employees meeting these two requirements and who desire cash reimbursement must complete a "Certification for Cash Reimbursement for Unused Sick Leave" form by January 31, 1976. Forms are available in Payroll.

Descanso Division

Our 1975 Christmas Show attracted nearly 20,000 visitors.

Jack Smith of the L.A. Times wrote his annual column about the bird walk he has been taking part in at Descanso every December.

This Saturday, January 10, at 1 p.m., the Descanso Staff in conjunction with the Pacific Rose Society will conduct its annual rose pruning demonstration. There will be a group of panelists to answer questions about the care and culture of roses and afterward, the Descanso staff will participate in the actual pruning of the roses and one staff member will demonstrate how a rose should be properly planted.

South Coast Division

Three new pieces of equipment received in recent months have already proven their worth, particularly to those who use them. Gene Johnson is operating a new Ford 4500 diesel tractor having a larger bucket and a hydraulic lift on the rear that gives it much greater versatility than our old International Harvester.

A new Toro Super Pro mower able to cut an 81-inch swath provides the operator with the additional advantage of an electric starter. A new heavy duty rototiller will certainly speed up the preparatory work on our undeveloped areas as we get ready to plant them.

Our nearly finished buildings got most of the goodies this past year including tile roofing, interior paint and fixtures. The buildings should be ready for occupancy in another month or so.

The garden also got some new birds for the season: 8 cattle egrets, one shoveler and a rather uncommon hooded merganser.

Arboretum Division

Earl Breitbarth has returned to work after being away a month because of his industrial accident. Welcome back Earl.

Loren Whitelock has returned from his trip from Mexico. He brought back with him several bromeliads, orchids and tillandsias. We will be using some of these plants to finish the Tropical Greenhouse.

Administrative Services

Welcome back to Marge Wood, out five weeks due to illness.